Choke

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by slashyrogue

Summary

Will comes home from work one night to find the dogs acting strangely.

There's a very good reason.

Notes

Based on the urban legend Choking Doberman.

There was something to be said about living off the beaten path.

Will was happy for the quiet mostly, the space, and lack of people nearby made it easy for the dogs to roam. No nosy neighbors to tell him to keep them on a leash. Though he had to lock them up when he went to work they were always so well behaved and happy to see him upon his return.

That night though something was wrong. He knew immediately when no one came to greet him. He dropped his bag by the door and ran towards the noise only to find all seven dogs lying together in the hallway.

“Hey guys,” he said, “You wanna go out?”

All of his pack got up at once, excited, and even some came to lick his hand as he watched them head for the back door.

All but one.

Winston, his newest, didn’t move from the floor and stared at the closet with interest.

“Winston, c’mon boy.”

He looked at Will and that’s when he saw the blood all over the right side of his face. Will cursed and ran to him, gently checking his face for injury but finding none. “What happened, Winston?”

Barks by the door reminded him he had six other dogs that needed to relieve themselves and Will picked Winston up to head for them.

His fear started to build even as Winston laid on his shoulder.

There didn’t seem to be anything wrong with Winston really, and when Will put him down he watched him run off towards the others outside. He made sure to check all the other dogs and saw nothing on them, not a scratch.

Was there something inside he’d gotten into?

He sighed as he waited for each of the dogs to finish, picked up after, and was just about to whistle for them to come back inside when he heard a cough.

Winston.

Will ran up in time to see him heave and cough again. He was choking. Will pried open his mouth and started to feel around. It took a few minutes but he felt something and pulled back, only for Winston to throw it all up onto the grass.

Or rather, them up.

Two fingers.

Human fingers.

He looked back at the house, his heart pounding, and then at Winston.

“We have a visitor, don’t we?” he asked, reaching out to pet Winston’s head.

Will stood and whistled for the pack to come to the door. They followed orders as always and followed running in as he went inside.

He saw the blood drops by the couch and stopped for a knife in the kitchen drawer. “Stay,” he said firmly.

Winston whined and Will walked forward. He surveyed his front room and saw more blood by the bed.

“I know you’re here, you might as well come out.”

No one came out, and Will took two steps forward.

“You’re gonna lose more than those fingers if you don’t—”

Someone came out from under the bed and Will stared him up and down. He wasn’t too tall or too short, sandy haired and oddly stylish. He wore a plastic suit over what looked like business attire and had his injured fingers wrapped in a bloody rag.

“Nice outfit.”

“I don’t like to get blood on my clothes.”

“Yeah, I guess that would be a hazard.”

“I seem to have broken into the wrong home, my apologies.”

Will laughed. “Sure, it’s fine. I have serial killers randomly pop up in my house all the time.”

“I could be a burglar.”

“Wearing a plastic suit to combat blood spill?”

His serial killer guest sighed. “If you’re planning on calling the police….I wouldn’t recommend it.”

“Are you threatening me?”

His guest smiled. “Of course not.”

Will whistled and all seven of the dogs came running. Winston ran out ahead of the others and growled as he stood in front of Will.

“It’s eight against one.”

“I see that.”

“Now I think is a good time for me to call the police.”

He pulled out his phone and pressed nine.

“You have no proof I was here to kill you.”

“The suit you’re wearing.”

“I can easily explain it away when the police arrive. Plastic jogging suits are quite the rage now.”

“And the murder tools you have on you?”

His guest winced as he squeezed his fingers. “I’m a doctor. I merely was accosted as I came into your home looking for help. My car has a flat tire down the road, you see.”

Will smiled. “Does it really?”

“It will once I arrive.”

He squeezed the knife handle in his hand. “I can’t let you leave.”

“If you call the police you will lose your life as will all seven of your beastly companions.”

Will glared at him and his anger started to rise. “What if I beat you?”

“Unlikely, even with my injury.”

His lip twitched. “Clever man, Mister….”

“I think names are not the best idea, at least in my case.”

Will whistled again and said, “Stay!” making all the dogs freeze.

“Just go then,” Will said icily, “But I won’t be far, you know. I have a photographic memory.”

His guest smiled. “As do I. Though I won’t be leaving without my fingers.”

“You honestly think—”

“You have no use for them and the longer I go without reattachment…”

“They’re outside.”

“Give me a cup of ice cubes and I will retrieve them myself.”

“Fuck you.”

His guest looked at Winston. “He is quite the guard dog, you know. I’m sure he’s very loyal. You must care for him very much.”

Winston growled.

“He’d bite off the rest of your fingers before you could do jack shit to him.”

“Do you wish to make a wager?”

Will huffed and turned back to the kitchen. He got a plastic baggie, filled it with ice cubes, and went back to the dogs. His guest hadn’t moved or tried to do anything to them. He tossed the baggie to the floor.

“Get the fuck out of my house.”

His guest nodded. “Have a good evening, Will.”

Will sputtered as the other man left and ran to the door to catch which direction he turned. He saw the fingers were gone and brandished the knife in his hand.

“IF YOU COME BACK HERE I’LL KILL YOU! YOU HEAR ME?”

He got no answer in return and went back inside shaken.

Part of him wanted to call 911 anyway, explain himself, but knew that they’d think he was even crazier to hear the story than they already did. He gave Winston a short bath, still shaken, and took four aspirin to calm down.

He barely got a wink of sleep all night and drank three cups of coffee before heading into Jack’s office the next day. Will paused as he saw Jack deep in conversation with someone, and when the other man turned Will froze.

“Will! I want you to meet someone!”

Will walked towards them both on edge and took the man’s hand as Jack introduced them. “This is Dr. Hannibal Lecter. Dr. Lecter, this is….”

“Will Graham, I presume.”

Jack chuckled. “I was just telling—”

Will hardly heard the rest of Jack’s speech, his defense was up so much, and when it was over he let Hannibal’s hand go quickly.

“Nice to meet you, Will.”

He glared. “Why is he here?”

“Dr. Lecter—”

“I am here to help with the case,” Hannibal interrupted, sitting down with the same flourish he’d left Will’s house in. Will stared down at his hands when he sat them in his lap.

“Did you hurt yourself?”

His left hand was bandaged much more properly now. Will could see the outline of reattached fingers beneath the white gauze.

“I nearly lost two fingers last night in a very odd mishap. It’s quite an embarrassing story.”

Will sat down beside him and leaned back with a smile. “I’d love to hear it.”

Hannibal smiled back. “Well, it starts with….”

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